



Rhode Island State Council on the Arts
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RISCA INVESTMENTS IN ARTS & CULTURE GRANT GUIDELINES

RISCA's Investments in Arts & Culture Program (IAC) provides annual operating support to arts organizations across Rhode Island that make important contributions to the vitality of our communities, the economy of our state, the enrichment of all Rhode Islanders, and our quality of life. Organizations must demonstrate excellent artistic, educational, and cultural value; responsiveness and engagement with their community; and a high level of financial and managerial accountability, including a history of support from RISCA.

The IAC program does not accept unsolicited proposals. The application is open by invitation only to pre-approved organizations. If you are unsure whether you qualify for IAC, contact Adrienne Adeyemi, Director of Grants to Organizations, at adrienne.adeyemi@arts.ri.gov or 401-222-3882.

Deadline New!

The deadline to apply for Investments in Arts & Culture is 11:59 PM on April 1. *Please note this change from the previous July deadline.*

IAC organizations will submit a narrative that details their activities over the previous fiscal year *and* the current fiscal year to date. This material acts as both the final report for the previous fiscal year and as the application for the coming fiscal year. ("Fiscal year" is based on the State of Rhode Island's fiscal year, which runs from July 1 through June 30).

In the event that the April 1 deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the revised deadline will be 11:59 PM on the next business day.

Any hard copy support materials must be postmarked or received at the RISCA offices by the deadline. Materials received on a later date without a sufficient postmark will not be counted as part of your application.

Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed, without exception.

Eligibility criteria

In order to qualify for the IAC program, you must:

- Be invited by RISCA staff to submit an application
- Be a nonprofit organization, incorporated and physically located in the State of Rhode Island, with articles of incorporation on file and currently registered with the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Office, OR a subdivision of government with appropriate legal

status. (For confirmation that your nonprofit organization is incorporated in the State of Rhode Island, visit the Secretary of State's [online database](#))

- Have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), a DUNS number, and have received federal tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Maintain arts and culture as a central part of your organizational mission (NOTE: if your organization does not maintain arts and culture as part of its mission but does administer arts-related programming, you may be eligible for funding through RISCA's [Arts Access](#) grant program)
- Be in continuous operation and exhibiting or producing arts programming for each year of the past five years
- Have received RISCA grant support for your arts programming in at least two of the past three years

RISCA may require written documentation that each of these eligibility requirements has been met before funds are awarded in this grant category.

Organizations that do not qualify under these eligibility criteria may be eligible to apply for support through RISCA's [Arts Access](#) grant program.

Requirements of ongoing participation New!

In addition to meeting the above eligibility criteria, an organization that has been invited to apply to the IAC program must maintain panel scores of 75 or above for ongoing participation. If an organization receives a panel review score below 75 in two consecutive years, the organization will become ineligible for IAC funding. The organization may still apply for [Arts Access](#) grant funding and can become eligible again for IAC once it meets the above eligibility criteria anew.

Substantive changes to an organization's mission, scope of programming, or organizational structure may necessitate separate review by RISCA staff to determine ongoing eligibility.

Funding considerations

The following conditions for funding apply to all IAC applicants:

IAC applicants will not request specific grant amounts. Rather, grants in the IAC category will be awarded based upon: the ranking of your application as determined by an independent, discipline-specific review panel; your organizational budget size (averaged over the last three years); the amount of your previous RISCA grant award; and the amount of funds allocated for organizational support by the Council.

Current IAC grantees are ineligible to apply for or receive funding from any other RISCA grant program. All applicants, however, are encouraged to collaborate as partners on other RISCA-funded projects.

Grants awarded by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts are provided by the Rhode Island State General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, on behalf of the citizens of Rhode Island. For that reason grant recipients must credit the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts on all printed material where funders and supporters are listed and on all printed programs (see Grant Award Requirements below for details).

All RISCA grant awards are contingent upon the availability of funds from the Rhode Island State General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Grant applications are considered on a competitive basis. No applicant is guaranteed funding at any specific level, even if all basic criteria have been met.

All grantees are subject to periodic audit or review by RISCA or the State of Rhode Island and must retain fiscal records for a period of seven (7) years following completion of the grant period.

What RISCA will and will not fund

Council support may be used for expenses related to arts programming production, presentation, marketing, and reasonable administrative expenses necessary for carrying out the activities described. Council support may not be used for:

- Bricks and mortar activities and capital improvements, or for the purchase of permanent equipment
- Eliminating or reducing existing debt, or for contributions to an endowment fund
- Fundraising efforts, such as social events or benefits
- Prizes and awards
- Hospitality expenses, such as food and beverages for openings or receptions; under no circumstances will the purchase of alcoholic beverages be supported
- Expenses incurred prior to July 1 or after June 30 of the fiscal year in which the grant has been awarded
- Applications where the purpose is to “regrant” or award funds using some or all of the RISCA grant funds
- Activities which are part of a graduate or undergraduate degree program, or for which academic credit is received
- Applications for projects that proselytize or promote religious activities, or which take place as part of a religious service
- Performances and exhibitions not available to the general public, or which are inaccessible to individuals with disabilities

Review process

The application review process approximately follows this schedule:

- Report/application narratives and materials are due by midnight on April 1
- Applications are checked by staff for accuracy and completeness, then prepared for review by seven discipline-specific review panels, comprising a combination of in-state and out-of-state panelists
- Applications are sent to the panelists, who read the applications and determine preliminary rankings online
- Review panels convene in late May to determine final applicant rankings
- Rankings are applied to RISCA’s formula for determining grant award recommendations
- Award recommendations go to the Council for their review and approval at the June Council meeting
- Notification of grant awards will be sent by mail no later than the end of July

Be aware that there is no guarantee that the process will move according to this schedule, and it may take more time to review and award grants at certain times of the year.

Once a grant has been awarded, applicants should understand that the grant processing procedure is lengthy. Applicants should be aware of this possibility and plan their cash flow accordingly.

Review criteria

All IAC applications will go through a panel review process. Panelists are selected for their ability to provide diverse viewpoints within the arts as well as broad demographic representation. Panelists evaluate applications based on published evaluation criteria and determine rankings upon which the grant award recommendations made to the Council are based. The Council makes all final funding decisions.

The panels will evaluate the application material based on the following review criteria:

Artistic Merit (50%)

Programs and participating artists are of high artistic quality. The projects are designed to expand the public or students' knowledge of and appreciation for an art form. Support materials are excellent quality and present a high level of artistic product.

Clarity and Achievability (25%)

The application clearly states what will be done; when and where things will take place; why the project should be supported with public funds; and how the applicant will go about organizing, managing and evaluating their work. Budgets are clear, detailed, and accurate. There is evidence that what is proposed is achievable by the applicant, on their own or in partnership with others. In the absence of past experience, information is provided that helps make a convincing case that activities will succeed.

Public Value/Community Engagement (25%)

The Arts Council seeks to foster a strong, vibrant Rhode Island arts community that is diverse in its public offerings and provides the people of this state with the greatest public benefit possible. The Council intends to support applicants that make significant contributions to one or more of the following areas:

- Employing, engaging, or presenting RI artists, or producing/presenting their works
- Producing or presenting new works of art or works that strive to make significant contributions to the advancement of the art form
- Promoting heritage and cultural diversity and diversifying cultural participation
- Implementing arts education as a core subject area, education reform inclusive of the arts, and life-long learning in and through the arts
- Encouraging access to and participation in the arts by persons in underserved areas
- Promoting accessibility to the arts for people with disabilities (all applicants must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and make their programs accessible to all)
- Expanding the number and breadth of partnerships that work to make the arts a vital part of community life and extend the reach of arts projects
- Making the arts a vital part of economic development and cultural tourism

Access for People with Disabilities

Applicants who need assistance completing an application and/or require an interpreter should contact RISCA well in advance of the deadline. LARGE PRINT GUIDELINES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

Persons with disabilities have the right to access all RISCA-funded programs. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states, in part, that “no otherwise qualified person with a disability ... shall solely by reason of their disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all programs and facilities meet or exceed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, and are accessible to all. Rhode Island arts facilities, and the managers of arts projects in Rhode Island, must make their programs as accessible as possible to the widest number of people and work to remove barriers that may block accessibility. This includes addressing the structural, programmatic, communication and attitudinal barriers that keep people with disabilities from fully participating in arts programs. See <http://www.nea.gov/resources/Accessibility/Planning/BriefChecklist.PDF> for more information.

If your facilities do not meet any one of the standards of the ADA, you are not in compliance and may be ineligible for RISCA funding.

How to Apply

Applicants must submit a completed Investments in Arts & Culture application form via <http://www.arts.ri.gov/org-apply>, including the following attachments:

- Letter of determination for 501c3 tax-exempt status from the IRS
- Most recent IRS form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N
- Organizational Budget Actuals for your most recently completed fiscal year, on the form provided in the application
- Board-approved Organizational Budget for your current fiscal year, on the form provided in the application
- Current list of staff and board members
- Work samples and other support materials (see below)

(Please note: [Rhode Island Cultural Data Project](#) Funder Reports for current IAC grantees will be due on July 31, 2015, the final report deadline for FY15 IAC grants. At that time you will be required to have two years of data with "Review Complete" status.)

For any questions regarding the form or attachments, contact Adrienne Adeyemi, Grants to Organizations Program Director, at 401-222-3882 or adrienne.adeyemi@arts.ri.gov.

A guide to the Investments in Arts & Culture grant application questions can be found at www.arts.ri.gov/grants/iacappguide.pdf.

Work samples and other support materials

Please provide at least three representative samples of programs/work produced during the last two years. If files are too large to upload here, you may instead include links to work located on external sites (Vimeo, Soundcloud, etc). It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that links are operable.

Materials can include:

- Documentation of artistic products (e.g., audio recordings, film, video, photos)
- Documentation of public participation (e.g. photos, slides, video of people participating in activities)
- Letters of support or testimonials from participants, audience members, or partner organizations
- Season brochures
- Printed programs
- Resumes or CVs of artists and/or staff
- Press clippings (please send no more than six)
- Sample evaluation tools (e.g., audience or membership survey)
- Summary of evaluation results

In the text box provided for each item, please list the title, year, duration, medium, etc. as applicable. Please limit audio and video clips to 2 minutes. (If a sample is longer than 2 minutes, you must indicate start and end times for the clip you would like the panel to review.)

A variety of materials is encouraged in order to illustrate your strengths and impact to the review panel.

PLEASE NOTE: RISCA's online system can accommodate images, text documents, video, and audio in most formats, however *there is a 25 MB limit for ALL support materials combined*. We recommend that video be uploaded to a site such as Vimeo or Youtube, with links provided in an uploaded document.

If you have trouble uploading media online you may email media files to adrienne.adeyemi@arts.ri.gov or DVDs and CDs can be sent to the RISCA offices by the deadline date.

All support materials not uploaded to the online system must arrive at the RISCA offices by the deadline date.

Grant Award Requirements

Recipients must acknowledge their RISCA support in a prominent manner in all materials and announcements, both audio and visual, related to the performance, exhibition, etc. mounted as a result of their support from RISCA. Recipients must also display, in a prominent manner, the RISCA logo in association with the acknowledgment. Further detail regarding acknowledgment can be found at <http://www.arts.ri.gov/grants/pr.php>.

Grant recipients are also encouraged to post events in Rhode Island that present their work (grant related and otherwise) to the RISCA Arts Calendar at:

<http://www.visitrhodeisland.com/what-to-see/the-arts-calendar/submit-an-event/>

Reporting requirements New!

Starting in 2014, all IAC organizations will be required to submit a one-page interim report form and their [Rhode Island Cultural Data Project](#) (CDP) Funder Report by July 31.

The form does not call for any narrative information; it will collect quantitative data such as participation numbers, bottom-line budget information, and other items required for RISCA's annual report on granting activities to the National Endowment for the Arts.

Note to new IAC applicants: If you are not already enrolled in CDP, RISCA strongly suggests you create a profile at this time.

Limits of Liability

The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts is not responsible for damage or loss of materials submitted to its office, whether or not such damage or loss is caused by negligence of the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, its employees, or agents.

All supporting materials submitted must be duplications. No originals or single editions of works will be accepted.

Support Materials will be mailed back to an applicant only if a self-addressed, stamped envelope with sufficient postage is provided (with the exception of manuscripts which will not be returned). Support Materials from applications without a self-addressed stamped envelope will be held for sixty (60) days following the award decision and may be picked up during normal business hours, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, at the Council offices. See the Assurances section at the end of the IAC application for additional information on RISCA's use of support materials from funded projects.